

Highways in the State of Himachal Pradesh and expenditure of Rs. 3.22 crore has been incurred till 31st January, 2001.

(b) Development of National Highways is a continuous process and is being undertaken in phased manner depending upon the availability of funds and inter-se-priority of works.

North-South Transport Corridor

207. SHRI B. J. PANDA: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have a proposal to create an International North-South Transport Corridor;
- (b) whether any agreement has been made with Russia and Iran in the matter;
- (c) if so, what would be its financial implications;
- (d) the time frame fixed for completion of the project;
- (e) what would be the length of the proposed corridor; and
- (f) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) to (d) An agreement has been signed on 12.9.2000 with Russia and Iran for operationalising North-south Transport Corridor. The financial implications have not been worked out precisely but it is perceived by the trade that the time and cost of moving the goods along this route would come down significantly. The Agreement is valid initially for a period of ten years.

- (e) and (f) The Corridor involves the following stretches:—
 - (i) Indian Ports to Bandar Abbas in Iran By Sea
 - (ii) Bandar Abbas to Caspian Sea By Rail/Road in Iran
 - (iii) By Casian sea to Astrakhan in Russia
 - (iv) Beyond Astrakhan through river system and Railways.

Length of the corridor would vary depending on the port of origin and destination.

CNG Buses in Delhi

208. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether CNG buses are being introduced in the National Capital Territory of Delhi to reduce pollution;
- (b) whether CNG is harmful for health;
- (c) whether drivers and passengers may be victims of paralysis and cancer like diseases;
- (d) whether any expert opinion was taken before placing orders for manufacturing of CNG buses; .
- (e) if so, the details of their opinion; and
- (f) whether the matter regarding CNG buses is also in litigation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI.: (a) Yes, Sir.

- (b) Emissions from CNG vehicles are comparatively less harmful for health than diesel and petrol vehicles.
- (c) No, such case has been reported so far.
- (d) No, Sir.
- (e) Does not arise.
- (f) Yes, Sir.